(b) The proposal to provide incentives for production of orthodox tea from out of the special fund created with collections of additional excise duty on tea is under consideration of the Government.

(c) No modality has been worked out yet for formulation of a special purpose fund for replantation/rejuvenation of tea gardens.

(d) The stakeholders' conference on tea has also recommended that in order to provide regular extension and marketing support to small growers and manufacturers, a special programme may be put in place under the aegis of the Tea Board to take care of their special needs. In pursuance of this, Tea Board has proposed setting up of a Small Growers Development Directorate under the aegis of the Tea Board.

Indo-EU Trade

1781. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose any steps to remove hurdles for further enhancement of trade between E.U. countries and India; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) The steps taken by the Government to remove the hurdles and further enhance trade between India and EU countries, *inter alia* include interaction at Government level, facilitating direct contact between businessmen, participation in trade promotion events, exchange of delegations, etc.

Export of steel

1782. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether export of steel has increased after imposition of restrictive measures by the US;

(b) whether Government have planned to improve export of steel; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the steps being taken by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) Yes, Sir. As per the lates figures export of steel show an increase as seen in the following table:

(Value in Rs. Crores)

Item	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	April' 04—August' 04
Steel Exports	564.86	1438.61	886.33	1624.63
(ITC HS Codes)		(+154.68%)	(-38.39%)	

Source: DGCI&S, Kolkata

(b) and (c) Some of the steps taken to boost the export of steel are as follows:

(i) The Medium Term Export Strategies of the Government emphasize on exploring alternate export markets and improved export incentives under the Duty Exemption/Remission Scheme provided by the Government of India;

(ii) Extending support to the industry in dealing with cases of trade action like imposition of anti-dumping, countervailing and safeguard duties, with the concerned countries or at the WTO;

(iii) Support by the different wings of the Government to boost exports, disseminate information pertaining to global trade and WTO-related issues and organisation of seminars/workshops to facilitate greater interaction between the exporting community.

Amendment in Patent Act

1783. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some of Government's coalition partners are opposing tooth and nail the proposed amendments to the Patent Act;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any amendments have been proposed by some of the UPA constituents; and